Remarks

Claims 1-11 and 13-22 are pending in the present application. By this reply, claims 20-22 have been added, which are fully supported by the original disclosure. Claims 1, 11 and 22 are independent.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 1-4, 6-11, and 13-19 have been rejected 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the combination of Takahashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,966,473) and Syeda-Mahmood et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,621,941). Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Takahashi et al. and Syeda-Mahmood et al., and further in view of Saitoh (U.S. Patent No. 5,220,621). These rejections, insofar as they pertain to the presently pending claims, are respectfully traversed.

Regarding independent claims 1 and 11, the Examiner maintains his rejection based on the combination of the same references, Takahashi et al. and Syeda-Mahmood et al. Particularly, on page 3, last line to page 4, line 6 of the present Office Action (dated Oct. 18, 2005), the Examiner alleges that Takahashi et al. teaches the scanning, using, recognizing and storing steps/features (steps a, b, c and d in the Office Action) of claims 1 and 11. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Takahashi et al. is directed to a system for *designing* forms suitable for automatic processing. Thus, in Takahashi et al., a blank (unfilled) form is first scanned and the scanned blank form is displayed on the display 11, such that the image data of the blank form is used in the design stage to determine what attribute characters or symbols are input at what position and

in what type for filled-out forms; see, e.g., col. 5, line 64 - col. 6, line 3 of Takahashi et al. In this way, when the actually filled-out form is input, the system can process the filled-out information in the form automatically. That is, Takahashi et al. first identifies the position and size of boxes in *a blank form at the design state.* Once this information is determined and prestored, then Takahashi et al. can accept filled-out forms (different from the blank form) for automatic processing.

In clear contrast, the same document is involved in the scanning, using, recognizing and storing steps/features of claims 1 and 11. For instance, as shown in steps S200, S230, S260 and S280 of Applicants' Fig. 4, a user designates an arbitrary point P on the scanned document, and the characterization data of the same scanned document and the characters in the box of the same scanned document are obtained and stored. Applications' embodied invention has an advantage in that Applicants' system is able to process any given document, where information is contained in boxes, immediately. There is no prior preparation of a form necessary. In Applicants' embodied invention, the user scans a document, the document can be displayed to the user, metadata may be assigned to each box, and the data available in the box is extracted and stored together with the metadata and the scanned image in a storage system.

The above-noted patentable distinctions between Takahashi et al. and Applicants' claimed invention have many practically implications. For instance, according to Takahashi et al., only specific documents, namely whose blank forms have been pre-processed, can be processed for automatic extraction of information on those specific documents. Contrarily, in Applicants' embodied invention, each and any given document, with information contained in a box on the document, can be used at any time for extracting and storing the information.

Further, a limitation of Takahashi et al.'s system is that, for each field, a fixed maximum number of characters is available. This limitation does not exist in Applicants' embodied invention. According to Applicants' embodied invention, the user is able to pick from a document those fields (boxes) that are relevant. There is no need to take all available fields as in Takahashi et al. Thus, Applicants' invention, as forth in claims 1 and 11, is effective and advantageous of Takahashi et al.'s system.

Furthermore, neither Syeda-Mahmood et al. nor Saitoh et al. corrects at least the above-noted deficiencies of Takahashi et al. Accordingly, even if the references were combinable, assuming *arguendo*, the combination of references would still fail to teach or suggest at least the above-noted features recited in independent claims 1 and 11. Thus, independent claims 1 and 11 and their dependent claims (due to their dependency) are patentable over the applied references, and the rejections are improper and should be withdrawn.

New Claims

Claims 20 and 21 depend from claims 1 and 11 and are thus allowable due to the dependency. Independent claim 22 emphasizes the above-noted distinguishing features of Applicants' invention over the prior art of record including Takahashi et al. in a varying scope. Thus, claims 20-22 are believed to be allowable.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant(s) respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw all of the objections and rejections of record, and earnestly solicits an early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters which need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Esther H. Chong (Registration No. 40,953) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and further replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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